

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TANANARIVE 1835

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ETRD, MA, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET-MALAGASY TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION AGREEMENT

SIGNED IN TANANARIVE

REF: A. TANANARIVE A-016 OF OCTOBER 16, 1975

B. TANANARIVE 1721

C. TANANARIVE 0014

1. SOVIET VICE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN TRADE ALEXEI MANJOULA
AND MALAGASY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS SIGNED BILATERAL TRADE
AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION AGREEMENT IN TANANARIVE OCTOBER 29.

2. TEXT OF AGREEMENT NOT YET AVAILABLE, BUT ACCORDING TO
JOINT COMMUNIQUE PUBLISHED IN LOCAL PRESS OCTOBER 30,
SOVIETS WILL ESTABLISH COMMERCIAL OFFICE IN TANANARIVE TO
EXPAND TRADE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. COMMUNIQUE
STATES THAT NEGOTIATIONS LEADING TO AGREEMENT "PAID
PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO CONCRETE PROBLEMS" OF PURCHASE
BY SOVIETS OF MALAGASY EXPORTS SUCH AS COFFEE, VANILLA,
AND CLOVES AND TO SOVIET SUPPLY OF PRODUCTS SUCH AS
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TRACTORS, TRUCKS, AND PUBLIC WORKS EQUIPMENT TO MADA-

GASCAR IN RETURN.

3. ECONOMIC COOPERATION SECTION OF AGREEMENT LISTS FIVE AID PROJECTS SOVIETS HAVE APPARENTLY AGREED TO UNDERTAKE:

A) INSTALLATION OF A 150KW TRANSMITTER FOR THE MALAGASY NATIONAL RADIO; B) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY AND TO THE MERCHANT MARINE TRAINING SCHOOL; C) SUPPLY OF EQUIPMENT TO THE UNIVERSITY, THE MERCHANT MARINE SCHOOL, AND THE NATIONAL GEOLOGIC SERVICE; D) A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR A NEW CEMENT PLANT; AND E) TECHNICAL AND MATERIEL ASSISTANCE FOR MINING RESEARCH.

4. COMMUNIQUE ALSO STATES THAT "SOVIET DELEGATION HAS NOTED WITH INTEREST OTHER PROJECTS SUBMITTED FOR ITS STUDY BY THE MALAGASY SIDE: A DAM; AGRO-INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS; AND THE SUPPLY OF MATERIEL FOR INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT."

5. COMMENT: EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS MALAGASY HAVE BEEN PRESSING SOVIETS TO BUY LOCAL EXPORTS, BUT SOVIETS ARE NOT PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN PRODUCTS MADAGASCAR HAS TO OFFER (REF A). DESPITE LONG NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES, IT WOULD APPEAR SOVIETS STILL HAVE NOT MADE SPECIFIC COMMITMENT ON QUANTITIES AND PRICES OF MALAGASY EXPORTS THEY WILL TAKE. DIPLOMATIC SOURCE RECENTLY REPORTED SOVIETS ARE COMPLETELY DISINTERESTED IN MALAGASY VANILLA AND CLOVES, AND NOW THINKING ONLY OF BUYING SOME COFFEE.

6. ECONOMIC AID PROJECTS SOVIETS HAVE AGREED TO UNDERTAKE APPEAR MAINLY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND FEASIBILITY STUDIES; MOST OF WHICH WERE ANNOUNCED EARLIER IN CONNECTION WITH BILATERAL AGREEMENT SIGNED LAST DECEMBER (REF C). IT SEEMS NOTABLE THAT SOVIETS HAVE AGREED ONLY "TO STUDY" MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS SUCH AS DAM AND ROADS PROPOSED BY MALAGASY. DESPITE EFFUSIVE EXPRESSIONS OF MUTUAL ADMIRATION AT SIGNATURE CEREMONY OCTOBER 29, LATEST SOVIET-MALAGASY BILATERAL AGREEMENT DOES NOT APPEAR TO ADD UP TO MUCH NEW FOR MADAGASCAR, PARTICULARLY IN COMPARISON WITH CHINESE AID AGREEMENT CONCLUDED RECENTLY WHICH SEEMS CONSIDERABLY MORE GENEROUS.DE SANTILLANA

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